

ask that following disposition of the nomination, the Senate resume consideration of the Kraninger nomination and the time be equally divided in the usual form until 1:45 p.m.; further, that following the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote on the Kraninger nomination as under the previous order; finally, that if the nomination is confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

### CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise to urge the majority leader to bring to the floor S. 3649, the First Step Act, which I have cosponsored. This bipartisan legislation, introduced by Senators GRASSLEY and DURBIN, includes positive prison reforms that the House passed by a 360–59 vote, combined with Senate-added provisions on sentencing reform that have passed out of the Judiciary Committee on a bipartisan basis.

Senators on both sides of the aisle agree that our criminal justice system is broken and badly needs repair.

In my own State of Maryland, we know the importance of criminal justice reform after the death of Freddie Gray in Baltimore Police Department custody in 2015. Baltimore is a good example of the necessary Federal and State partnership we need in order to reform the criminal justice system. When I am talking about the criminal justice system, I am not only talking about the so-called back end of the system, which involves sentencing, corrections, and release from prison. I am talking about the “front end” of the system, which involves relations between the community and police and often the first interaction between our citizens and law enforcement.

In Baltimore, the U.S. Department of Justice initiated a Federal “pattern or practice” inquiry at the request of the city of Baltimore and the Federal congressional delegation. This investigation led to a comprehensive report finding a pattern and practice of unconstitutional arrests and policing in Baltimore that disproportionately affected minority residents, particularly the African-American residents of Baltimore.

Baltimore City and the Justice Department ultimately agreed to a consent decree and are now under supervision by the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland. This will entail a multiyear process of overhauling the police department to finally give the citizens of Baltimore the police department they deserve, using the “guardian” and not the “warrior” model, as recommended by President Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing.

This fall I visited the headquarters of the Baltimore Ravens in Owings Mills, MD, in Baltimore County. I am a Baltimore resident and live in Baltimore County and, of course, am a proud Ravens fan. On that day, I had come to discuss criminal justice reform. I wanted to hear directly from the Ravens players about their insights into the criminal justice system, and they shared their stories involving their friends and family with me.

I am pleased that several Ravens players and team executives wrote a letter earlier this week to Senator MCCONNELL asking him to bring this critical legislation to the floor. The letter reads: “The undersigned players and executives of the Baltimore Ravens write to voice our support for the First Step Act, a bill which has the potential to bring transformative and much needed change to our criminal justice system. Criminal justice is an issue that deeply affects our community in Baltimore, as well as the nation as a whole. Not only will this legislation strengthen our nation’s criminal justice system, but it enjoys the backing of an incredibly diverse group of supporters.”

Indeed, this legislation is endorsed by both law enforcement and civil rights groups. Law enforcement groups endorsing this legislation include the Fraternal Order of Police, the National District Attorneys Association, and the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives. Civil rights groups endorsing this legislation include the ACLU and Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. President Trump has endorsed this legislation, which has a growing number of bipartisan Senate cosponsors.

The legislation includes key sentencing reform provisions added by the Senate to the House-passed measure. First, it expands the so-called safety valve, which allows judges to sentence below the mandatory minimum for qualified low-level nonviolent drug offenders who cooperate with the government. Second, it makes retroactive the application of the Fair Sentencing Act, in which Congress addressed the crack-powder sentencing disparity, and allows individuals affected by this disparity to petition for sentence reductions. Third, it reforms the two-strikes and three-strikes laws, by reducing the second strike mandatory minimum of 20 years to 15 years and reducing the third strike mandatory minimum of life in prison to 25 years. Finally, the

legislation eliminates the so-called stacking provision in the U.S. Code, which helps ensure that sentencing enhancements for repeat offenses apply only to true repeat offenders. The legislation clarifies that sentencing enhancements cannot unfairly be “stacked,” for example, by applying to conduct within the same indictment.

This legislation marks the first time that the Fraternal Order of Police, the largest police union, has ever supported a criminal justice reform bill. At law enforcement’s request, the bill prohibits time credits for individuals convicted of a fentanyl trafficking offense, as well as bars time credits for individuals convicted of repeatedly possessing or using a firearm in relation to a violent or drug trafficking crime.

On the prison reform side, this legislation includes several positive reforms from the House-passed FIRST STEP Act. The bill makes a good time credit fix and revises the good-time credit law to accurately reflect congressional intent by allowing prisoners to earn 54 days of credit per year, rather than 47 days. The bill prohibits shackling pregnant prisoners and requires healthcare products be provided to incarcerated women. The bill requires prisoners be placed within 500 driving miles of their home and provides additional phone, video conferencing, and visitation privileges. The bill expands evidence-based opioid and heroin abuse treatment for inmates. The bill expands compassionate release under the Second Chance Act and expedites compassionate release applications.

The revised Senate bill also includes several prison reforms beyond what were included in the House-passed bill. The bill establishes an Independent Review Committee of outside experts to assist in the development of the risk and needs assessment system. The National Institute of Justice would select a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization with expertise in risk and needs assessments to host the IRC. This added guardrail will help to ensure the risk and needs assessment system is evidence-based and minimize racial disparities.

It allows the use of earned credits for supervised release in the community, such as halfway houses or home confinement. The bill also would permit individuals in home confinement to participate in family-related activities that facilitate the prisoner’s successful reentry.

It effectively ends Federal juvenile solitary confinement, and limits the discretion of the Bureau of Prisons to deny release to individuals who meet all eligibility criteria.

Let us take this first step to reform our broken criminal justice system by passing this legislation during this session.